

TEACHING THE PRESENT SIMPLE WITH THE HELP OF A SONG

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A. Introduction to different kinds of activities that can be exploited with a song

Listening to songs in class is a popular way to motivate learners. Many teachers use the lyrics to produce a listening activity of gap-filling in which students listen to music and complete the gaps with the words they hear. Teachers may decide to eliminate lexical items or grammatical structures in order to focus the activity on a particular area. Gap-fills are one of many ways to exploit the grammar and vocabulary in song's lyrics. Paul Ashe has looked at some types of activities and suggested songs to use as follows:

Depending on the song, the activities listed below can be adapted to focus a wide range of language points.

Very often, one song may be suitable to highlight more than one structure or lexical area.

Gap-fill: Create gaps for the verbs on the song and tell students which verb form to use. Students then listen and check. *You Found Me* by The Fray, is good for irregular verbs and Alanis Morissette's *Hand In My Pocket* can be used for adjectives.

Prompts: Ask students to create complete sentences from the prompt words you give them in pairs. The complete sentences will be the song lyrics. They then listen to check their answers. *Sunny*, by Bobby Hebb, is good for prepositional phrases. For example:

- sunny / yesterday / life / filled / rain = *Sunny, yesterday my life was filled with rain.*

- sunny / you / smiled / me / eased / the pain = *Sunny, you smiled at me and really eased the pain.*

Multiple choices: Give multiple choice options for the targeted grammar. For instance, the use of the infinitives after modal verbs in the song *Don't Stop The Music*, by Rihanna:

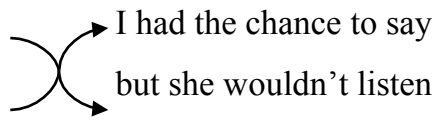
Baby, I must saying / say / to say your aura is incredible

If you don't have to go / going / go, ...

Sentence halves: Students match the two halves of a sentence correctly and listen to check their answers. *Won't Go Home Without You*, by Maroon 5, is useful to practice connectors:

I asked her to stay

She left before



Questions and answers: Give the students questions and ask them to provide the full answer. The answer is a line from the lyrics of the song. Students listen and check. For example, the use of the present and past simple in Jon Bon Jovi's *Thank You For Loving Me*:

Q: What do you do when I fall down? A: *You pick me up when I fall down* (pick me up)

Q: What did you do when I couldn't breathe? A: _____ (part my lips)

B. Teaching Present Simple Tense with the song *Wonderful Tonight* by Eric Clapton

- The song is used as a part of the grammar lesson "The Present Simple Tense"
- In Controlled Practice, the T designs a listening activity in which this song is used.